



Montana Economic Developers Association

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TO: House Education Committee
Rick Jore, Chair

RE: SB152 Education Funding Bill

The Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) represents more than 200 economic development professionals that work throughout the State. We are professional "lead" economic developers, business specialists, government employees, and staff members of affiliated non-profit organizations which promote and foster economic development activities in Montana.

This letter is sent to encourage your support of SB152. MEDA recognizes the need for life long education and realizes that the foundation for the life long learning process must be built on public education. This foundation, in order to be strong and to meet the current and future education requirements of all Montanan's must have an education system that responds to our citizen's needs.

SB152 would address many of the state's educational needs including access to affordable and relevant higher education opportunities. This bill would also expand the Governor's Best and Brightest postsecondary scholarship program to provide aid on the basis of need and merit to Montana residents for two and four year postsecondary institutions. Some of the scholarships would be specifically allocated to areas of study to promote economic development or address critical workforce shortages in Montana. The education of Montana's workforce relates directly to Montana's economy; as the economy improves, skill levels must be elevated to meet the workforce demand.

To support and encourage future economic development in Montana, we encourage you to support SB152. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rick Edwards
President

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